DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 226 824 PS 013 346

AUTHOR Moore, Dorothy L.
TITLE Musical Environment: Its Influence on the Preschool Child.
PUB DATE [82]
NOTE 9p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Ability; Early Childhood Education; *Family Environment; *Kindergarten Children; *Music; Music Activities; Music Appreciation; *Parent Influence; *Predictor Variables; Socioeconomic Status

ABSTRACT

In order to identify significant environmental factors that relate to the rhythm and pitch responses of 5-year-old children, a team of elementary music teachers individually tested approximately 100 preschool children upon kindergarten entrance. The rhythm responses measured pulse (or beat), rhythm pattern identification, and rhythm pattern duplication. Pitch responses measured pitch pattern identification, vocal range and pitch accuracy, and pitch pattern duplication. Coupled with these data were environmental and personal factors obtained from a questionnaire sent to children's parents. These factors included the musical instruments owned and played in the home, parents' participation in musical activities, the sex and age of the child, socioeconomic status, and the child's attendance at nursery and church schools. In general, results indicated that young children living in an environment that provides exposure to music and music making instruments, and that encourages and rewards musical attempts, are more apt to demonstrate higher levels of musical development than those children who have few or none of these advantages. (MP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

X Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED226824

MUSICAL ENVIRONMENT: ITS INFLUENCE ON THE PRESCHOOL CHILD

Dorothy L. Moore, Ph.D.

What causes one child to be able to sing in tune and to respond with rhythmic accuracy while another cannot? Many kindergarten and first grade teachers along with music educators throughout the country ponder this question as children enter the schools each year with or without the ability to respond musically. Fortunately, most of them are at least on a continuum scale of performance capability.

Depending upon which side of the Nature-Nurture coin one looks, it might be concluded that a child's musical ability is either inherited from talented parents or acquired environmentally through musical experiences in the home and surroundings with family and friends. However, if he researches both sides of the controversy, he will tend to appreciate the interaction of both elements and try to explore and identify their many facets in order to decide what part they play. Past research has identified some of these factors as intelligence, heredity, age, sex, race, socio-economic status and environment.

In order to identify significant environmental factors, particularly in the home, as they relate to the rhythm and pitch responses of five-year-old children, a team of elementary music teachers tested individually slightly over 100 pre-school children upon kindergarten entrance. The rhythm responses measured pulse (beat), rhythm pattern identification and rhythm pattern duplication. Pitch responses measured pitch pattern identification, vocal range and pitch accuracy, and pitch pattern duplication.

PS 013346

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Dorothy L. Moore
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Coupled with this data were environmental and personal factors obtained from a questionnaire sent to the parents. These factors included the musical instruments owned and played in the home, parents' participation in musical activities, the sex and age of the child, socio-economic status and the child's attendance at nursery and church schools. From this wealth of information the differences in rhythm and pitch ability were assessed, and the causes in terms of early musical experiences were sought out for identification.

Based on the data which emerged from this study, there can be little doubt that young children living in an environment which provides more exposure to music and music making instruments, and where they are encouraged and rewarded for their musical attempts, are more apt to demonstrate higher levels of musical development than those children who have few or none of these advantages.

Certainly, heredity's part in this environment might well have been a valid factor; however, the data reveal that children are more likely to make use of their potential musical talent if they have more opportunity to see, hear and do, and thus develop whatever aptitude they possess.

Although the more rapid development of girls at this age has often given them an advantage over boys in performance ability, sex (female) appeared to be an important factor in only one pitch test, whereas age appeared as a predictor in one pitch and two rhythm tests. This gives credence to the importance of physical

maturation for rhythmic coordination and perhaps more singing experience.

Both groups of musical responses in the study correlated significantly with environmental factors. However, responses in the area of pitch tended to have higher correlations with those factors and used fewer predictors than responses in rhythm. Kirkwood (1970) found similar evidence and concluded that the child's rhythmic ability may be developed at an earlier age than his tonal ability but that the latter correlates more highly with environmental factors.

Although socio-economic status appeared only twice, as a predictor, its form of measurement for this study, parent occupational status, might belie its importance, just as measurement by income level might. A parent's high occupational or salary level does not determine an interest or participation in musical activities nor the acquisition of musical instruments. Both do, to an extent, make it possible to pursue an interest, ability or desire for acquisition if any of them is present. It is with regard to this factor that many environmental predictors could be considered related to socio-economic status.

Extending it even further, one might consider high socio-economic status a factor in the sending, or ability to send, one's child to nursery or church school. Whatever the reason, the fact that some form of nursery and church factors appeared as predictors of high performance a total of 27 times emphatically suggests that preschool children would benefit from the musical experiences provided by such schools.

The results and conclusions of this study indicate the need for further research in this and in related areas. If certain early environmental factors do affect a child's ability to respond musically, we need to identify them more precisely and be able to couple them with their correlating responses.

The significance of nursery school experiences in this study strongly suggests the probable benefit from the musical experiences provided. This adds further evidence to the current thesis that children must be exposed to many kinds of learning activities much earlier than most of them are at this time.

Since the results indicate a positive relationship between a musically advantaged home and a child's rhythm and pitch responses, a preschool music program stressing the seeing and hearing of musical instruments, the singing of adults both alone and with the children and the listening to many kinds of music would be helpful in enabling the musically disadvantaged child to perform at a much higher level of achievement before kindergarten entrance. If at kindergarten entrance, this lack is in evidence, it would seem that certain kinds of experiences could be devised in music, as in other subject areas, both tonally and rhythmically to help a disadvantaged child "catch up."

References

Alford, D. "Emergence and Development of Music Responses in Preschool Twins and Singletons: A Comparison Study." Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Tallahassee: Florida State University, 1966.

Andrews, F., & N. C. Deihl. "Development of a Technique for Identifying Elementary School Children's Musical Concepts." Council of Research in Music Education 13(1968):1.

Aronoff, F. W. Music and Young Children. New York: Holt, Rhinehart & Winston, 1969.

Bentley, A. Musical Ability in Children and Its Measurement. New York: October House, 1966.

Boardman, E. "An Investigation of the Effect of Preschool Training on the Development of Vocal Accuracy in Young Children." Council of Research in Music Education 11 (1967):46-49.

De Yarmen, R. M. "An Experimental Analysis of the Development of Rhythmic and Tonal Capabilities of Kindergarten and First Grade Children." In E. Gordon (Ed.), Experimental Research in the Psychology of Music. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1972.

Drake, R. M. Manual for the Drake Musical Aptitude Tests. Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1957.

Drexler, E. N. "A Study of the Development of the Ability to Carry a Melody at the Preschool Level." Child Development 9(1938):319-332.

Farnsworth, P. R. "The Effects of Nature and Nurture on Musicality." In 27th Yearbook of the National Soceity For Education, Part II, (1928):233-247.

Ferguson, G.A. Statistical Analysis in Psychology and Education. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971

Galton, F. Hereditary Genius. London: Macmillan, 1869.

Gardner, H. "Children's Duplication of Rhythmic Patterns." Journal Of Research in Music Education 19(1971):355-360.

Guilford, J. P. Fundamental Statistics in Psychology and Education. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965.

Hill, J. D. "A Study of the Musical Achievement of Culturally Deprived Children and Culturally Advantaged Children at the Elementary School Level." In E. Gordon (Ed.), Experimental Research in the Psychology of Music. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1969.

Kirkpatrick, W. C. "Relationships Between the Singing Ability of Pre-Kindergarten Children and Their Home Musical Environment." Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 1962.

Kirkwood, G. "Development of a Test of Fundamental Musical Behaviors for First Grade Children." Unpublished master's thesis. Austin: The University of Texas, 1970.

Lundin, R. W. An Objective Psychology of Music. New York Ronald Press, 1967.

Pflederer, M. "The Responses of Children to Musical Tasks Embodying Piaget's Principals of Conservation." Journal of Research in Music Education 12(1964):251-268.

Rainbow, E. L. "A Pilot Study to Investigate the Constructs of Musical Aptitude." Journal of Research in Music Education 13(1965):3-14.

Reynolds, G. E. "Environmental Sources of Musical Awakening in Preschool Children." Dissertation Abstracts 21(1960) 1214;15.

Scheinfield, A. Your Heredity and Environment. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1965.

Seashore, C. E. The Psychology of Musical Talent. New York: Silver Burdett, 1919.

Seashore, C. E. The Psychology of Music. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1938.

Shelton, J. S. The Influence of Home Environment Upon Musical Response of First Grade Children. (Doctoral Dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers) Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1965, No. 66-4419.

Shuter, R. The Psychology of Musical Ability. London: Methuen, 1968.

Simons, G. M. "Comparisons of Incipient Music Responses Among Very Young Twins and Singletons." Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Tallahassee: Florida State University, 1962.

Simons, G. M. "Comparisons of Incipient Music Responses Among Very Young Twins and Singletons." Journal of Research in Music Education 12(1964):212-226.

Thackray, R. An Investigation into Rhythmic Abilities. Longon: Novello, 1969.

Van Alstyne, D., and E. Osborne. "Rhythm Responses of Negro and White Children Two to Six." Social Research of Child Development Monograph 2(1937):4.

Wing, H. Tests of Musical Ability. Cambridge: University Press, 1971.

Wyatt, R. "The Improvability of Pitch Discrimination." Psychological Monographs 58(267)(1945):1-58.

Dorothy L. Moore, Ph.D. is presently Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education at Georgia Southern College. She was formerly Music supervisor and consultant for School District 742 including St. Cloud, Minnesota.